



ONE

I took a large gulp of my freshly hot coffee latte, then fixed a stare at the ceiling casually, trying not to yawn. I was not in the mood today, not after that pathetic road reconstruction in front of my apartment that enabled me to sleep all night long. Well, I knew very well that I could neither blame the workers who did the reconstruction just at the exactly wrong time nor the earsplitting noises of the machines, but who wouldn't even think of blaming anyone about it after he had been made wide awake for twelve exhausting hours?

My name is Matthew Morris.

I was sitting inside a congested café full of office workers having their hasty lunches, except me, who was killing my time uselessly while waiting for my company to arrive. He didn't seem to turn up before long, so I had to be extra patient.

I opened my mouth wide and finally burst out a long, sleepy yawn. It felt like eternity for me to wait for him. But soon after I re-closed my mouth, I saw him hurrying through the café glass door, grinning guiltily and holding his khaki-colored hat still on his head.

'Sorry, sorry, I know I'm very late,' he greeted when he had been seated right in front of me, trying to catch his breath. 'It's just that I had to attend-well, you know what causes me to be late, don't you?'

I sighed impatiently. 'Yeah, yeah, you had to attend a crucial press conference, interview a very significant politician, interrogate the most important person on earth, and whatever the others are. I had memorized all of your clichés, George, it won't work this time.'

George smiled with his typical impish grin. He was working as a reporter at *The Daily Post*, the biggest newspaper company in town, and to tell you the truth, he was indeed a serious, devoted, and hardworking reporter. But he loved his job too much that he often missed his own appointments, even urgent ones, like now,



when he had promised me to come at twelve but arrived an hour later just because of his obsession to his job.

“So, are you still busy with all your detective stuff?” George asked after he had ordered a cup of hot cappuccino. “I haven’t seen you for quite a while now.”

I shrugged. “Well, not really, I suppose,” I replied with an idle tone. Since two weeks ago all I did was wandering around the town for some enjoyable entertainment to have a go on, but I don’t think I am suited to any of them at all.”

“Entertainment?” George let out a laugh. “You don’t need entertainment, Matthew. Your job is the best entertainment you can get! I know you, Matthew, I know you too well to see that you’re always enjoying yourself the most when you’re investigating a complicated case.”

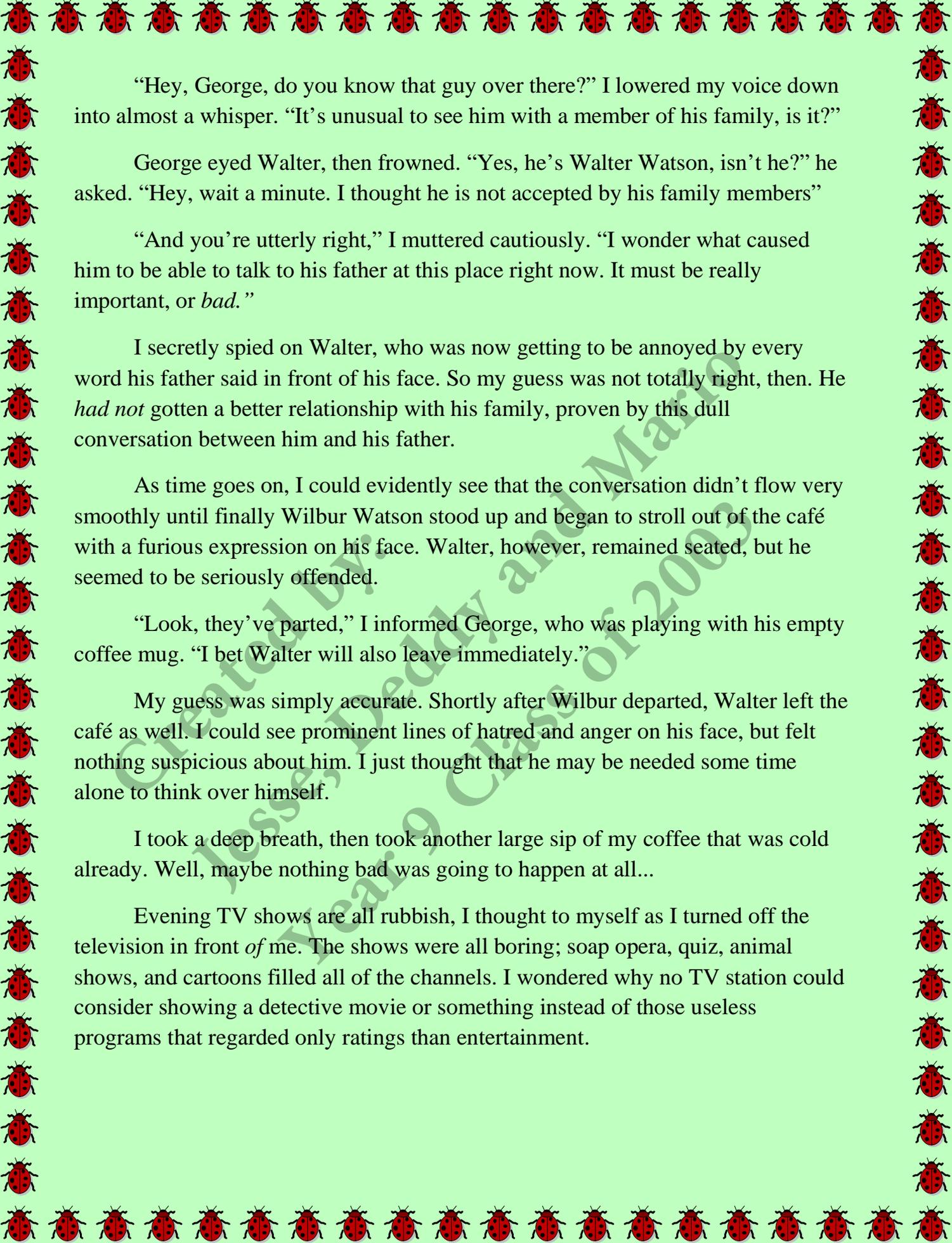
“Yes, I have to admit that, George, but I had no case to inspect,” I said. “That’s why I’m looking for some temporary substitutes to amuse me until I am obliged to solve another case.”

George was about to respond to my sentence when I pulled out my hand and signed him to save his words for later, because at that moment I saw someone familiar was walking into the café. My eyes widened in confusion, because it was highly unusual to see this particular person inside a common roadside café, especially at this kind of time.

Walter Watson.

I knew Walter Watson when he asked me a favor to help him solve a small problem of his. He was a very brilliant mathematician, indeed, and his extremely dexterous knowledge of mathematics should not be confirmed. However, he didn’t get along with his family very well, particularly because the rest of his family members were all successful businessmen, and they wanted Walter to become a businessman himself just like them.

So it was merely usual for me to see him walking side by side with his *father*, Wilbur Watson, into a café, like what I saw just now.



“Hey, George, do you know that guy over there?” I lowered my voice down into almost a whisper. “It’s unusual to see him with a member of his family, is it?”

George eyed Walter, then frowned. “Yes, he’s Walter Watson, isn’t he?” he asked. “Hey, wait a minute. I thought he is not accepted by his family members”

“And you’re utterly right,” I muttered cautiously. “I wonder what caused him to be able to talk to his father at this place right now. It must be really important, or *bad*.”

I secretly spied on Walter, who was now getting to be annoyed by every word his father said in front of his face. So my guess was not totally right, then. He *had not* gotten a better relationship with his family, proven by this dull conversation between him and his father.

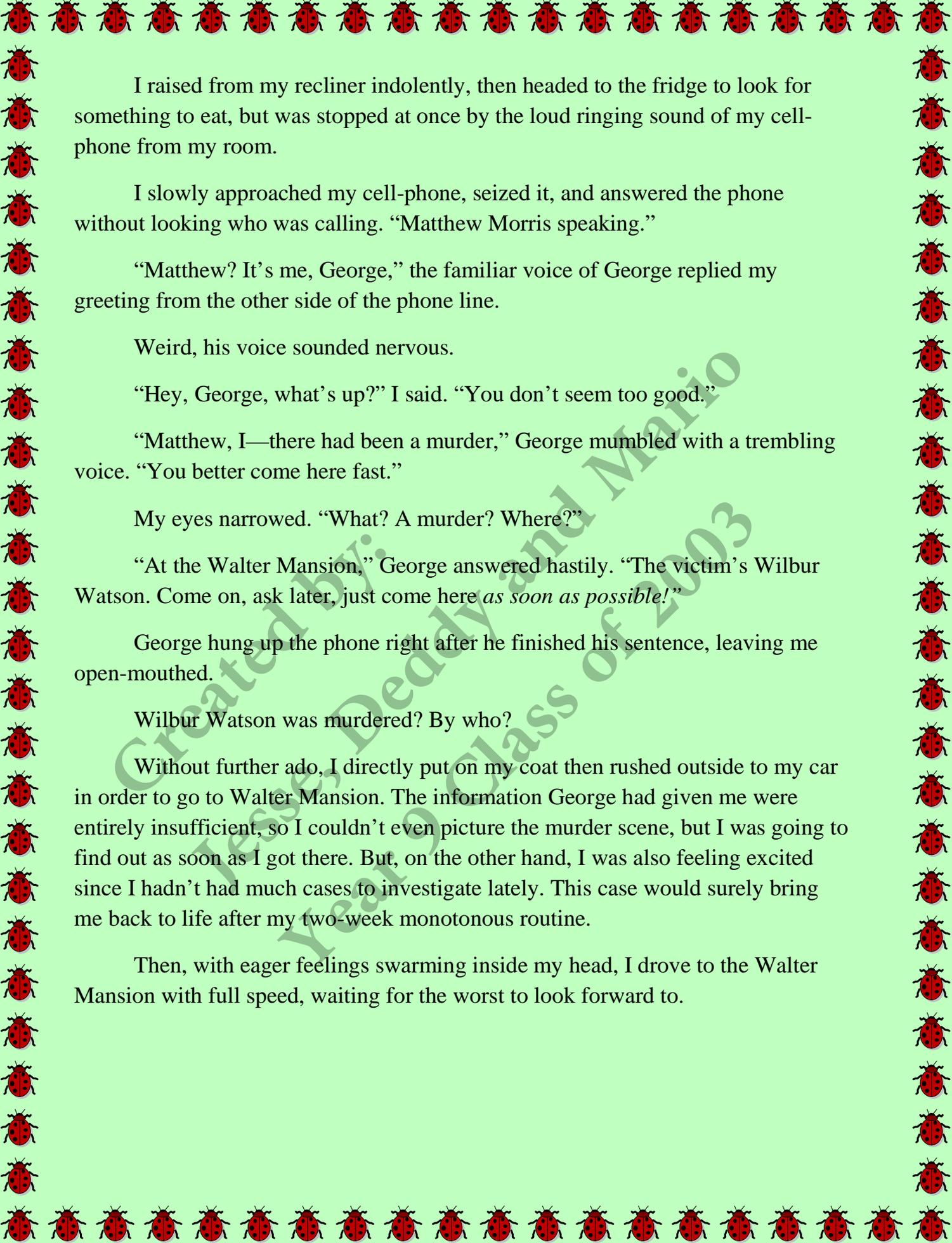
As time goes on, I could evidently see that the conversation didn’t flow very smoothly until finally Wilbur Watson stood up and began to stroll out of the café with a furious expression on his face. Walter, however, remained seated, but he seemed to be seriously offended.

“Look, they’ve parted,” I informed George, who was playing with his empty coffee mug. “I bet Walter will also leave immediately.”

My guess was simply accurate. Shortly after Wilbur departed, Walter left the café as well. I could see prominent lines of hatred and anger on his face, but felt nothing suspicious about him. I just thought that he may be needed some time alone to think over himself.

I took a deep breath, then took another large sip of my coffee that was cold already. Well, maybe nothing bad was going to happen at all...

Evening TV shows are all rubbish, I thought to myself as I turned off the television in front of me. The shows were all boring; soap opera, quiz, animal shows, and cartoons filled all of the channels. I wondered why no TV station could consider showing a detective movie or something instead of those useless programs that regarded only ratings than entertainment.



I raised from my recliner indolently, then headed to the fridge to look for something to eat, but was stopped at once by the loud ringing sound of my cell-phone from my room.

I slowly approached my cell-phone, seized it, and answered the phone without looking who was calling. “Matthew Morris speaking.”

“Matthew? It’s me, George,” the familiar voice of George replied my greeting from the other side of the phone line.

Weird, his voice sounded nervous.

“Hey, George, what’s up?” I said. “You don’t seem too good.”

“Matthew, I—there had been a murder,” George mumbled with a trembling voice. “You better come here fast.”

My eyes narrowed. “What? A murder? Where?”

“At the Walter Mansion,” George answered hastily. “The victim’s Wilbur Watson. Come on, ask later, just come here *as soon as possible!*”

George hung up the phone right after he finished his sentence, leaving me open-mouthed.

Wilbur Watson was murdered? By who?

Without further ado, I directly put on my coat then rushed outside to my car in order to go to Walter Mansion. The information George had given me were entirely insufficient, so I couldn’t even picture the murder scene, but I was going to find out as soon as I got there. But, on the other hand, I was also feeling excited since I hadn’t had much cases to investigate lately. This case would surely bring me back to life after my two-week monotonous routine.

Then, with eager feelings swarming inside my head, I drove to the Walter Mansion with full speed, waiting for the worst to look forward to.